

Take a buddy, avoid a headache . . .

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HOW many times have we as Sailors been told to go on liberty with a shipmate, especially in a foreign port? It's emphasized in the POD and during quarters prior to tying up, and is even universally known as the "buddy system." Unfortunately, pairing with a shipmate for liberty apparently slipped the mind of a Coast Guard member during his cutter's recent Caribbean port visit.

The lone member was returning to his ship during early morning hours when a car stopped ahead of him. The Coast Guardsman thought he was getting a ride for the short distance to his ship—imagine his surprise when one of the car's occupants jumped out and hit the fellow over the head with a club! The service member was able to pick himself up from the ground and run to the safety of his ship,

where he reported the incident to the OOD and XO.

Several hours later as the ship got underway, the member complained of nausea and headaches, and was dropped off at a naval hospital in Roosevelt Roads, P.R. An emergency room technician ordered a CAT scan—the scan revealed a blood clot on his brain. He was transferred to a civilian hospital where emergency brain surgery successfully removed the clot. His recovery is expected to be 100 percent. However, he lost 25 days of work while recovering from his surgery.

Think about your safety, and even when visiting what might be considered a relatively safe port, go on liberty with a buddy—that's why it's called the buddy system. Adhere to it—if nothing else it might save you a headache! ☺

